

A Vigil for Joe Rose

by Michael Whatling

iUniverse

Author Michael Whatling is an experienced collegiate level educator who has taught diversity courses that include race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. These courses led him to recognize the scarcity of research in this area that includes the voices of those being studied – LGBT students themselves. While working on his Ph.D. thesis, he interviewed students in the 16 to 18 year age group and elected to present his research as a series of semi-fictional stories based on his interviews – in the students' own words. They are all based in Quebec, Canada – often thought of as a very accepting community.

Each student's story is different, but with many of the same situations. Some schools and classmates were more accepting than others. Some parents and family members were as well. Each student reacted in a fashion dictated by their own fears and conscience.

Through these stories Mr. Whatling shows the reality of “accepting” schools and friends. It is his hope that school administrators and teachers all over North America read and understand his point of view – that our schools, even “accepting” schools, are doing their LGBT students a disservice.

From my perspective – recognizing that I am neither a high school student nor gay – this is an important work. I feel that I hear the student's voices. They ask only for acceptance and respect for who they are.

This is an excellent book. It should be in every school and municipal library, accessible to parents, students, and their teachers and administrators.

How much did I like it? My wife and I purchased it for our local PFLAG Chapter, even though we have my review copy at home. Highly recommended.